

Equal Justice America
Building II - Suite 204
13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112
Phone (804) 744-4200 · Fax: (804) 744-6789

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you for providing me the means to pursue a position in public service this summer. I had a very rewarding experience at the WilmerHale Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. I worked Primarily in the Center of Health Law and Policy Innovation subdivision of the Legal Services Center. MY work there focused mostly on HIV- and AIDS-related policy initiatives on behalf of needy populations suffering from these conditions throughout the country.

One of my major projects related to opt-out routine HIV testing in Arkansas. Arkansas was exploring adopting a bill that would require routine HIV testing, which in turn would require that Arkansas insurers cover one annual HIV test per person. The theory behind routine testing is that if an HIV test is simply part of routine screening, as cholesterol and blood sugar tests are, and everyone had one, it would reduce the stigma associated with testing. Initiatives aimed at reducing stigma and increasing screening are especially needed in Arkansas. Southern states generally have the highest rates of new HIV infections, the most AIDS deaths, the greatest number of people living with HIV and AIDS, the largest percentages of persons with HIV who are not in care, and the fewest resources. Arkansas in particular has approximately twice the national average rate of people living with HIV who are not receiving care. Furthermore, Arkansas receives the least amount of federal HIV funding and does not contribute any state funds to HIV care programs. These resource limitations have led to devastating eligibility restrictions for access to services and lifesaving medications for people living with HIV in Arkansas. Because of the limited state and federal financial resources for testing, it is especially critical that insurance companies in Arkansas cover routine HIV test.

The Legal Services Center assisted the Arkansas Minority Health Commission and the HIV Minority Taskforce in Arkansas in developing a report for the legislature regarding complications and barriers that would occur if the legislature passed a bill requiring routine testing. My first task was to design a survey tool to determine what providers think about routine testing and HIV in general. Another intern developed a counterpart survey intended for patients. The surveys were distributed statewide and are in the data collection phase.

After completing the survey, I drafted a comprehensive report about how state law could be clarified regarding informed consent for adolescents seeking HIV testing, and pretesting and post testing procedures. I researched current HIV-related law in Arkansas to identify inconsistencies with the CDC recommendations for implementing routine HIV testing. Although Arkansas law was largely consistent with CDC recommendations, I identified a few key areas that could present barriers to successful implementation. For example, Arkansas has a provision that permits providers to release adolescents' health information to their guardians over the express objection of the minor. I recommended that this provision be amended to include language

found in other states' legislation that requires providers to prioritize minors interests before disclosing sensitive information. This addition would better protect minors' privacy and may encourage more adolescents to agree to participate in opt-out testing. This report will be given to Representative Fred Allen of the Arkansas House of Representatives and synthesized into his recommendations to the legislature regarding opt-out testing.

Throughout the process of developing the surveys and researching exiting law, I was invited to participate in the collaborative committee meetings with our Arkansas clients. I was actively involved in communicating our progress, obtaining client feedback, and incorporating our clients' requested changes. I very much felt that I was part of the team and that my work was used in a substantive way, which made for a very rewarding summer. Given the ambitious objectives and broad implications of the Arkansas initiative, I believe I was able to make a meaningful contribution to the HIV-positive community in Arkansas, which, as described above, is in great need of resources.

In addition to my work on the Arkansas project, I contributed to several ongoing projects at the Center. We conducted a state-by-state assessment of the needs of people living with HIV across the nation in order to predict the effect of the changes mandated by the Affordable Care Act, and compiled profiles of each state. These reports were distributed to the states and will be used to ensure that people living with HIV in each state do not fall through the cracks, and that states have appropriate resources in place to accommodate the increased number of persons who will become eligible for Medicaid and HIV services as a result of the ACA.

I also participated in the many educational and social activities the Center organized for its summer interns. WilmerHale hosted deposition and negotiations trainings for all the interns at the Legal Services Center. Harvard Law School had educational speakers bimonthly throughout the summer that interns were welcome to attend, which I did. Additionally, we had weekly lunches where we reviewed the different practice areas at the Center, heard from community advocates, and learned about the projects other interns were working on. Community advocates included professors, representatives from City Life/Vida Urbana, and abuse and assault specialists from local medical-legal partnerships. The Center hosted several social events, ranging from happy hours and mid-day cupcake breaks to a potluck barbeque.

Thank you again for giving me means to have a positive influence on communities in need this summer. I appreciate all the education, training, and opportunities the Legal Services Center provided me, and will use my new skills to better contribute to needy persons throughout my career. Please feel free to contact me anytime for more information about my summer, or to connect other students who may be interested in working at the Legal Services Center to me.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Noel
Georgetown University Law Center, expected 2014



Center for
Health Law
and Policy
Innovation

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

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Dear Mr. Dan Ruben,

I am writing about Betsy Noel's experience this summer as a student attorney intern with the Harvard Law School Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation (CHLPI). I have had the great pleasure of supervising much of her work this summer and in all of her work Betsy proved a highly motivated, organized, creative thinker as well as a skilled communicator and collaborator in team settings. Her professionalism and independent initiative enhanced the value of her work product in our law and policy practice.

This summer Betsy worked on both national and state-specific projects and in all of her work she has displayed extremely strong research and writing skills. She analyzed specific aspects of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that relate to opportunities for increased access to health insurance and health care for poor and low income individuals living with HIV/AIDS and other serious health conditions. Through her work relating to the administrative implementation of the ACA, she has a strong understanding of the relationship between statutory reforms and regulatory implementation of health care reform, both from the structural and procedural perspective and from the practical, on-the-ground perspective that much of our work involves.

Betsy's skills, professionalism, commitment to learning and contributing to team goals, and substantive knowledge translated well to her work here this summer. She leveraged her previous experience working in community health to create surveys aimed at assessing stigma and barriers to care for persons living with HIV in Arkansas. Betsy also conducted substantive research regarding the current state of Arkansas law that was very helpful in our initiative to implement routine HIV testing in Arkansas.

In short, Betsy was an excellent addition to Harvard Law School Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation. Please feel free to contact me at 617.390.2677 or arosenbe@law.harvard.edu if you need additional information.

Best regards,

Amy Rosenberg, JD
Associate Director

Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School